

FIRMette - Desktop User Guide

Make FIRMettes from FIRM Scans Saved Locally

BACKGROUND AND APPROPRIATE USE

Digital pictures of FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are the simplest way to view flood hazards electronically. There are two types that may be used for official purposes – FIRM Scans and FIRMettes, both of which are available for FEMA's entire current and historical map inventory.

FIRM Scans are pictures of a whole map. They are available by either downloading online from FEMA's Map Service Center (MSC) Web site, or from CD and DVD saved and used locally from your computer. Because a FIRM Scan is a picture of a whole map sheet, you need a specialized large-format printer to create a paper copy.

For those who can only print to smaller, standard size paper, FEMA provides free tools for creating an individualized flood map, or FIRMette. FIRMettes (see Figure 1) are portions of FIRM Scan images formatted for printing on standard office printers. You can make FIRMettes from any map in the FEMA inventory online by using the FIRMette – Web tool accessible from the MSC Web site, www.msc.fema.gov. For those who prefer to work offline or use flood maps stored locally on your computer, a FIRMette – Desktop tool is available for download from the MSC Web site, www.msc.fema.gov. As with paper flood hazard maps, remember to check for Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) that provide updates to the FIRM Scans and FIRMettes. These are listed in the MSC catalog for each FIRM Scan.



Figure 1. A FIRMette is a full-scale section of a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that you create yourself online by selecting the desired area from an image of a FIRM.

BEFORE YOU START

To use FIRMette – Desktop you will need to download the tool from FEMA's MSC Web site, www.msc.fema.gov. Try the tutorial for detailed instructions on downloading.

OPENING THE APPLICATION

When you have successfully downloaded the FIRMette – Desktop tool, a shortcut icon will appear on your desktop screen. Double-click on icon to open and begin. A welcome screen will appear. To skip the tutorial, click on Get Started to create a FIRMette.

SELECTING THE FIRM

From the main toolbar, select the File drop-down menu and click on Open. Select the file that contains the FIRM you would like to use and click Open to launch. Please remember that the FIRMette – Desktop

tool can be used only with files already downloaded and saved locally to your computer. FIRMs may be downloaded from the MSC Web site, www.msc.fema.gov, or ordered for delivery on CD and DVD. Both color (.png) and black and white (.tif) flood maps may be used.

CREATING A FIRMette

The image opened will have three default selections: FIRMette Area, the North Arrow, and the Title Block. You can move these selections to the area of the FIRM desired.

To zoom in and out to see more or less detail of the mapped region and pan, either click on View in the main toolbar or use the scroll wheel on your mouse. From the View drop-down menu, select Full View to return to the original image size. It is a good idea to have the image in full view before choosing the FIRMette selections.

An official FIRMette must contain three regions: FIRMette Area, the Title Block, and the North Arrow. The North Arrow and the Title Block should already be selected by the FIRMette – Desktop program. If you find that these selections are not accurate, you can change them by dragging the selection box to the corresponding region. To choose the FIRMette Area, click the FIRMette Area button and drag the FIRMette selection box to the area you would like. To start over, click on Clear Selections.

An 11" x 17" flat map must contain five regions: FIRMette Area, the Title Block, the North Arrow, the Scale, and the Effective Date. A FIRMette can only be created from map pages of a Flat Map, not the index page. These can be found starting on page two onward of the Flat Map. You can select the page by clicking on the drop-down menu in the main toolbar.

PRINTING A FIRMette

To change paper size, select the desired size from the Page Size drop-down menu. There are three standard paper sizes to choose from: 8.5" x 11", 8.5" x 14" and 11" x 17". The larger the paper size, the larger the FIRMette area can be.

To print the FIRMette, click on the Print button. This will bring up the Print Preview window. Here you can see the FIRMette selections and ensure they are correct before printing. Click on Print to send the FIRMette to a printer. Click on the Print to PDF button to save the FIRMette as a .pdf file. Please note that all FIRMettes will print as landscape by default so there is no need to change this in your printer settings.

EXITING FIRMette — DESKTOP

When you are finished with a FIRM, you can select Close to close the file. To open a new FIRM, select Open from the File drop-down menu in the main toolbar. If you are finished creating FIRMettes, click Exit to close the application.

